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DEPARTMENT OF NOTES AND REVIEWS

It is the purpose, in this department, to present from time to time brief original notes, both of methods of work and of results, by members of the Society. All members are invited to submit such items. In addition to these there will be given a few brief abstracts of recent work of more general interest to students and teachers. There will be no attempt to make these abstracts exhaustive. They will illustrate progress without attempting to define it, and will thus give to the teacher current illustrations, and to the isolated student suggestions of suitable fields of investigation.—[Editor.]

AQUATIC MICROSCOPY

To those of us who remember the first thrills of work with the microscope it is not easy to understand why there are not more amateur students of nature who cultivate a life interest in the microscope. Very much of the early enthusiasm of this Society was given to it by those who were using the microscope in amateur exploration of the marvels of nature. The American schools and colleges make much use of the microscope, but those who are most interested in these things tend to go on into the study of some more or less technical aspect of the subject. It would seem however, if our teaching were as effective and inspiring as it should be, that more of our students would thruout life continue an amateur interest in this charming field.

Perhaps, as we grow older in America and achieve more leisure and more general interest in culture, we may again increase the number of those who untechnically use the microscope for the mere love of its interesting revelations. In England there are many such, and numerous simple handbooks have been issued which helpfully guide the beginner. Dr. Stokes has been a long-time exponent and writer for such students in this country. His little book, now in its fourth edition, has done its part to keep alive amateur interest. The author undertakes in the simplest and most concrete way possible to answer the questions of the embryo naturalist, such as:—"How can I best find and collect the microscopic plants and animals? How can I tell them apart and determine what they are and how they are named? What outfit will I need, and how can I prepare my material for profitable study?"

These questions are answered in the following chapters: I, The Microscope and its Parts; II, Common Aquatic Plants Useful to the

Microscopist; III, Desmids, Diatoms, and Fresh Water Algæ; IV, Rhizopods; V, Infusoria; VI, Hydra; VII, Aquatic Worms (and Insect Larvæ); VIII, Rotifera; IX, Freshwater Polyzoa; X, Entomostraca and Phyllopoda; XI, Water Mites and Water Bear.

The especial virtues of the book are in its untechnical language, its simple descriptions, its concrete keys and synopses, and its outline drawings. The author states that, with the exception of a few western forms, every type of organism mentioned in the book was taken by him from a single pond in central New Jersey. Aside therefore from its value as a guide for the study of nature, it has a value as a contribution to intensive study of a limited locality. The same features which make it useful to the independent beginner will make the book helpful to the students of elementary Biology in high school and college, and stimulate to more effective field work.

Aquatic Microscopy for Beginners, by Alfred G. Stokes. Fourth edition, revised and enlarged; 324 pages, illustrated. John Wiley & Sons, New York and London. Price $2.25 net, postpaid.